



Pandemic Flu—Are You Prepared?

Presented by Tracy Richardson, SPHR
Division Director
Division of Career Opportunities

Objectives

- What is H1N1 and how does it compare to seasonal flu?
- What does a Pandemic Flu mean to my business and community?
- How will my local community respond to a Pandemic Flu?
- Does my company have a plan in place to deal with a Pandemic Flu Outbreak?



What is H1N1 Flu?

- H1N1 (aka Swine Flu) is a type of influenza that normally affects pigs
- Recently it has been transmitted through human to human contact
- The virus spreads through similar manners as “seasonal flu”; coughing and sneezing by the infected person
- This particular strain is different than regular seasonal flu because it is a novel strain, meaning it has not been seen in humans before and **therefore there is no human immunity.**



What is Pandemic Flu?



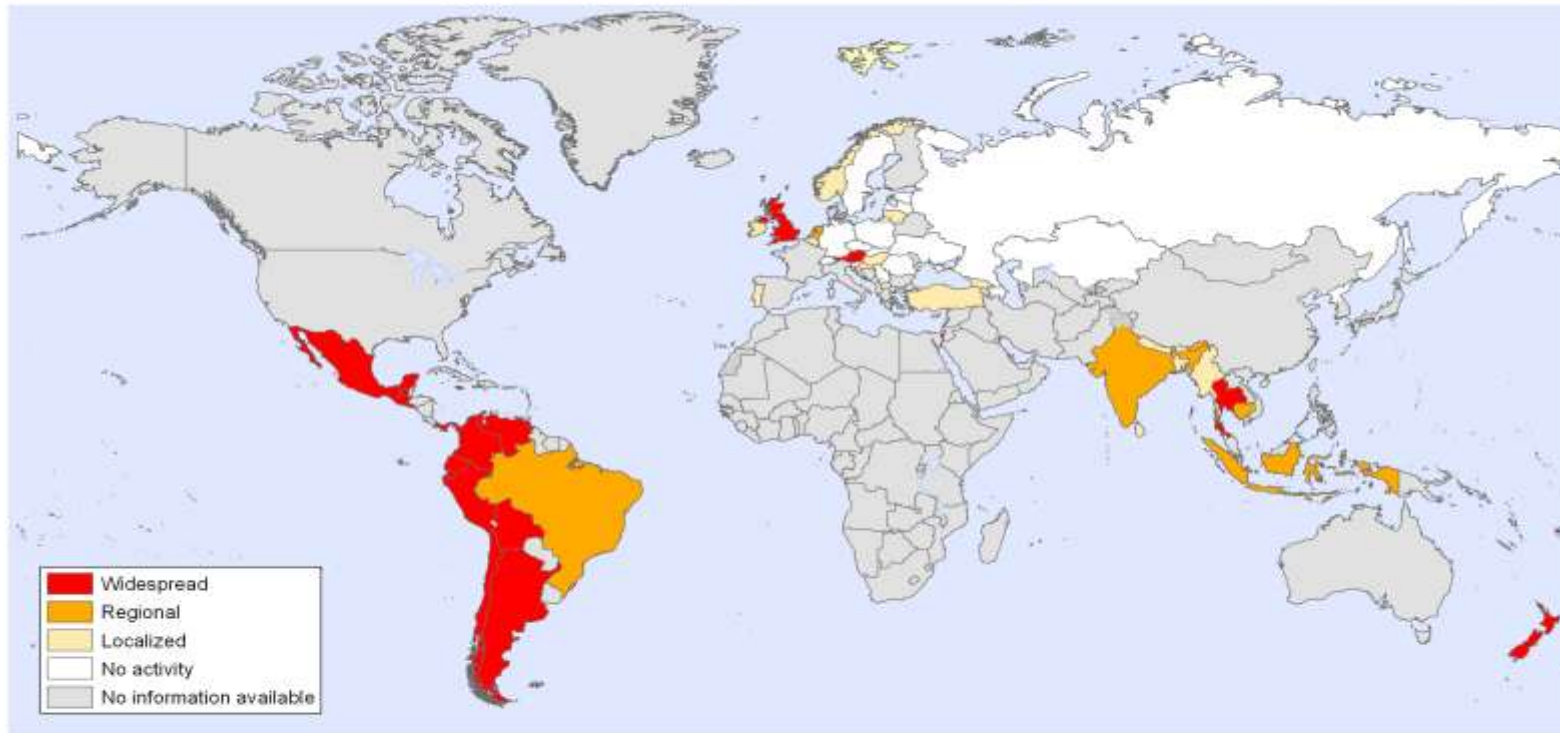
- The World Health Organization issues Pandemic alert levels based on the spread of the influenza virus across multiple countries
- The alert level is now at level 6, which signifies a Pandemic episode
- Pandemic alert levels do **not** signify severity of disease only spread
- As of August 2009, over 182,000 cases have been reported worldwide with 1799 deaths, 1579 of the deaths have been in the Americas.

Geographic Spread of Influenza activity

Geographic spread of influenza activity

(Geographic spread reflects the number and distribution of regions within a country reporting influenza activity.)

Status as of Week 32
03 Aug - 09 Aug 2009



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the World Health Organization concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Dotted lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement.

Map produced: 19 August 2009 11:39 GMT

Data Source: World Health Organization
Map Production: Public Health Information
and Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
World Health Organization



World Health
Organization

© WHO 2009. All rights reserved.

Intensity of Acute Respiratory Diseases

Intensity of acute respiratory diseases in the population

(Intensity is an estimate of the proportion of the population with acute respiratory diseases, covering the spectrum of diseases from influenza-like illness to pneumonia.)

Status as of Week 32

03 Aug - 09 Aug 2009



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the World Health Organization concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Dotted lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement.

Map produced: 19 August 2009 11:35 GMT

Data Source: World Health Organization
Map Production: Public Health Information
and Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
World Health Organization



World Health
Organization

© WHO 2009. All rights reserved.

1918 Influenza Pandemic



- Three waves over 1½ years
 - 1st began March 1918
 - **2nd began September 1918** (most severe)
 - 3rd began December 1918
- Estimated 20 million to 50 million dead worldwide
- The worst natural disaster in recorded history in terms of # lives lost in a short time
 - Many survivors had brain damage due to encephalitis.
- Most victims were otherwise healthy young adults
 - Robust immune system over-triggered by virus???
 - Persons >50yo exposed to variant of H1N1 previously???

2009 H1N1 “Swine Flu”



- Appears to be a new strain
 - Combination of Human-Avian-Swine viruses
- During the first wave Mexico hardest hit
- In the northern temperate zones, overall rates are declining in both North America and Europe though the virus is still found across a wide area throughout both regions and pockets of high activity are being reported in 3 U.S. states and a few countries of Western Europe.
- It appears very likely that pandemic H1N1 will be the dominant influenza virus in the early part of the winter months.

What are the signs and symptoms?



- Sudden onset of illness
- Fever higher than 100.4 degree Fahrenheit
- Chills
- Cough
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Stuffy nose
- Muscle aches
- Feeling of weakness
- Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain and/or exhaustion occur more commonly in children

Who is at risk?

- persons 65 and older
- persons with chronic diseases
- infants
- pregnant women
- nursing home residents
- However all age ranges have been infected by this strain of Influenza



What should people do to prevent H1N1 Flu?



The same steps you take to prevent the common cold apply when trying to prevent H1N1 flu.

- Wash hands often with soap and water or use waterless, alcohol-based hand rubs.
- Cover the nose and mouth with a handkerchief or tissue when sneezing or coughing.
- Avoid touching the eyes, mouth, and nose, when coughing or sneezing.
- **Keep children home from school, day care or other social gatherings if they are sick.**
- **Stay home from work or other public settings if you are sick.**
- Avoid crowded places where people are confined in an indoor space.



What should people do if they have been exposed to Swine Flu?



- If you are sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others.
- If you have a fever, difficulty breathing, a cough, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, you should talk with a health care provider by telephone.
- Your health care provider will determine whether testing or treatment is needed.
- Before visiting a health care setting, tell the provider about your symptoms and that you may have been exposed to swine flu.
- Do not travel while sick, and limit your contact with others as much as possible to help prevent the spread of illness.

Myths and Answers



- I got a flu vaccine, will that protect me?
 - Flu vaccine's are developed based on prevalent strains of the Influenza virus.
 - The previous flu vaccine's were developed for different strains so individuals who received a flu vaccine are not immune from this strain.
 - There is NO current vaccine for this strain; vaccines are expected in October
- Can I get swine flu from eating pork?
 - No. H1N1 flu is not transmitted through food
- Should I take Tamiflu to protect me?
 - Tamiflu is an antiviral that is used to treat individuals with active cases of flu.
 - There are limited supplies and it is not recommended to provide this to non-symptomatic individuals as a preventative measure

Is my business prepared?



- In the event that a Pandemic Flu results in an outbreak in our local community; the Department of Public Health will look to businesses and schools to assist in reducing the spread of the disease.
- Schools may close 5 – 7 calendar days depending on severity of illness and absenteeism.
- Businesses may be recommended to close or at least send home those exposed to the illness.
- Healthcare facilities are likely to become overrun with individuals suffering from the illness.
- How will you run your business if your employees; your suppliers employees or your customers are sick or self-quarantined?

Planning Issues—Business Impact



- Who are your key positions and what is your business response if they cannot work?
- What are critical inputs (raw materials, suppliers, etc.) and what will you have to do/have to maintain business if those critical inputs are lost, delayed or decreased.
- Do you have ancillary workforce that you can bring in for just-in-time response?
- Will your business see a surge during a flu Pandemic?
 - Healthcare
 - Pharmaceutical manufacturing
 - Pharmacy distribution
 - Medical Supplier

Planning Issues—Impact on Employees

- Forecast and allow for employee absence (up to 30% of workforce)
- Plan for methods to reduce face to face contact
- Provide annual flu vaccination
- Evaluate employee access to healthcare
- Plan for and provide employee assistance for mental health issues



Planning Issues—Policy Development



- Develop policies to address issues
 - Non-punitive absenteeism
 - Return to work standards
 - Prevention of Disease Spread
 - Employee Education
 - Facility Cleaning
 - Exclusion of those infected; mandatory sick leave
 - Monitor absenteeism with employees for increase in flu like symptoms
 - Identify triggers for implementing companies response plan

Planning Issues—Resource Allocation



- Do you have sufficient and accessible infection control supplies (soap, water, hand sanitizer, tissues) in all business locations?
- Can you support a portion of your workforce to work remotely; cancel face to face meetings or use teleconferencing?
- Do you have on-site medical staff or access to medical staff resources if employees develop symptoms or have questions?

Planning Issues--Communication



- Do you have a business hotline/website for your employees to disseminate information?
- Do you have material ready to communicate to employees on proper respiratory hygiene?
- Do you have material ready to communicate to employees on symptoms and your company's response if an employee contracts the illness?

Planning Issues—Collaboration



- Do you know if your health insurance carrier covers commonly used anti-virals for treatment of influenza? If not, do you have plans in place to assist your employees in getting this treatment?
 - Stocking of anti-virals or treating employees with anti-virals as a preventative measure is NOT recommended.
- Is your business considered part of the critical infrastructure and do you have teams in place with other community agencies?
 - Healthcare
 - Transportation
 - Agriculture
 - Utilities

Resources

- <http://www.pandemicplan.gsk.com/calculator.html>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/business/toolkit/>
- <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/businesschecklist.pdf>
- <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/workplaceplanning/index.html#employees>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

